



Cold Calling

Why you should do it

Cold calling is a strategy emphasized in *Teach like a champion* as a way to get students engaged and keep them on their toes during lessons. Cold calling allows teachers to employ a system in which students recognize that they need to be engaged in the material because they may be called on at any time.

Cold calls offer teachers a way to assess student understanding quickly and from a range of students by asking different students to provide various parts of each response you are looking for. Lemov states that cold calling increases the pacing of lessons, because you as a teacher are no longer waiting for volunteers to step up. If you have plenty of volunteers, it is important to designate times when you will be cold calling and times in which you are taking volunteers. It is possible to combine the two, but students need to know that you are not just cold calling the less involved students or the lower students. Cold calling also shows students what they know and will hopefully increase their volunteering of answers.

Cold call applied accurately will increase student engagement and improve your teaching. Cold call applied incorrectly decreases student engagement and turns it into a putative

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TEED 540 Student Teaching Nugget



How to Implement Cold Call

Cold Call is:

- **Predictable**—cold calling keeps students focused, but is not effective if attention has already been lost. Students need to know that you may employ cold call at different moments. Cold calling is most effective as an integral part of your instruction, but not your only system.
- **Systematic**—cold calls are not designed to call out students for being off task. Cold calls need to be universal and impersonal. This removes judgment on what a student is able to do, believed to have done, and your emotions about the student. All students need to understand that anyone could be called on at any time simply because that is what you do.
- **Positive**—cold calling is a way to bring all students into the class discussions. It is not a gotcha to catch students off-task, demonstrate that students don't know something, or teach them a lesson. Cold call should be used to call on students with engaging questions that invite them to join the discussion.
- **Scaffolded**—calling on a variety of students with a progressively more complex questions on the same topic builds whole class understanding and allows for a greater ability to check your students' understanding of the lesson.

Remember:

Cold calling is not a "gotcha" to get students back on task.

Cold calling is an engagement system to keep your students anticipating questions and thinking ahead.

Cold calling is universal meaning that all of your students should be called on regularly, not based on their level.

Ways to implement:

Cold call works best when it is randomized.

Have students' names on sticks and draw them from a cup. Or other randomized system.

Calling on students in a manner that is free of bias is challenging. Keep working on this.



